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ABSTRACT

Distributed by the U.S. Departments of Agriculture, Education, and Health and Human Services, this pamphlet provides parents with information and advice about their infants in the ninth month of life. Following a brief description of developmental characteristics at this age, the pamphlet offers advice on a variety of topics, including: ways to keep baby safe, games for learning and skill-building, the 9-month checkup, early intervention and baby's developing skills, bathing the baby, bowel habit and sleeping patterns, feeding suggestions, protecting the baby's teeth, choking hazards, and nonparent infant care. The pamphlet concludes with a list of relevant information resources for families. (KB)

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Healthy Start, Grow Smart

Your Nine-Month-Old

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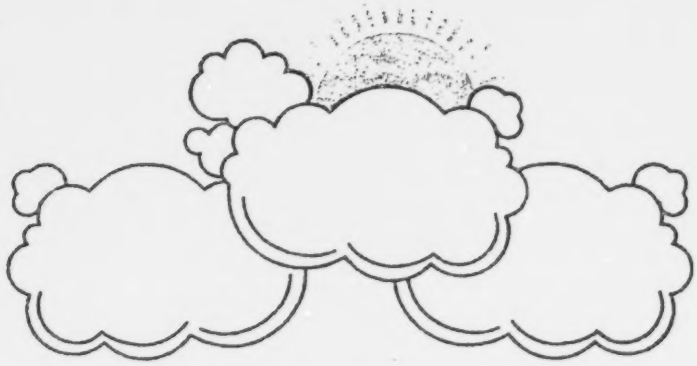

Healthy Start, Grow Smart

Your Nine-Month-Old

Prepared by:

U.S. Department of Agriculture

U.S. Department of Education

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

2002

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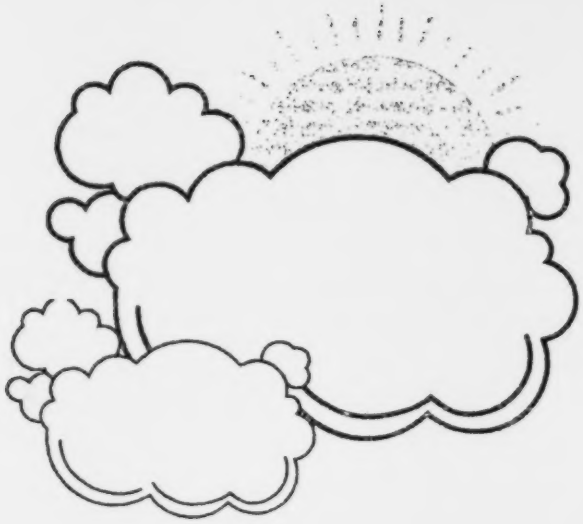


Nine Months—and Growing!

Mickey is nine months old. His parents, Lisa and José, have plans for their family. Lisa has gone back to school and looks forward to graduation. José has found a better job in the neighborhood superstore.

And Mickey! He has two teeth, sits up without wobbling and almost sleeps through the night. He's pulling himself across the rug with his arms—crawling can't be far behind. He babbles and laughs when he sees his grandparents.

Mickey nurses several times a day, but he is always eager for his "big boy" dinner. Tonight he will have mashed sweet potatoes, chopped spinach and cheese. Next week he will go to the clinic for his nine-month checkup.

Now Lisa and José are eager to know what comes next.

- ★ Mickey doesn't drink from a cup—is that OK?
- ★ And what about crawling? Will that make home life different?
- ★ How can Lisa and José help Mickey continue to grow, learn and laugh?

And what about you and your baby? In this issue, you will learn how your nine-month-old baby grows and learns.

Questions Parents Ask

Question

My mother is always telling me how to take care of my baby. I know she means well, but it makes me upset. I don't want to hurt her feelings. What can I do?

Answer

Grandparents naturally want to be involved in your baby's life. Other relatives may also offer advice. They often think they can save you from mistakes they made. They only want the best for your child.

All parents have to find their own way of rearing children. Everyone makes mistakes. No one does it perfectly. Here are some ideas to try:

- ★ Be open-minded. Use the advice that makes sense to you. Forget the rest. For example, your mom may insist that you "dress up" the baby when you take him out. But you may find that your baby is more comfortable without a bonnet and shoes. So you dress him in a play shirt, diapers and socks.
- ★ Explain what you are doing. "We don't toss him in the air or play 'horsy.' That kind of rough play can damage his brain."
- ★ Point to an expert. "My doctor told me to put him to sleep on his back."

- ★ Talk it out. Discuss feeding and snacks. "Bananas are more nutritious than doughnuts." Explain about bedtime and naps. "I sit by his bed and pat him on the back until he stops crying and falls asleep." Talk about playing and toys. "He loves to play 'patty-cake' over and over."
- ★ Let grandparents know specific ways they can help. "Dad, you could help me most by baby-sitting once a week." Or, "Mom, I never have enough quarters for the laundromat. Could you save some for me?"

After your explanations, grandparents and others may say, "Well, we did it this way, and all our kids turned out all right." Avoid arguments. Say, "Thank you for your opinion. I know you are trying to help." You may also let them know that new information is now available on what helps babies develop and what things to try to avoid.

When grandparents baby-sit, give them food and diapers for your baby. Explain safety issues to them. They may have old-fashioned ideas about safety or they may have forgotten how active a nine-month-old can be. Have on hand anything else your baby may need, such as medicine. Explain about any allergies or problems, like teething.

Remember that no one will care for your baby exactly as you would. Everyone does it differently. Your baby will come to know and love his grandparents in a special way.

Safety First—at Every Age

Always remember

- ★ Buckle your baby into a car safety seat every time he rides in a car. Make sure the safety seat is correctly secured.
- ★ Stay with your baby when he is playing near or in water. Watch him closely.
- ★ Never, ever shake your baby.
- ★ Put your baby to sleep on his back unless your doctor tells you to do otherwise. Insist that others who care for your baby do the same.
- ★ Serve healthy foods. Avoid sweetened, salty or fatty ones.
- ★ Lock up alcohol, drugs and other chemicals. These can kill your baby.
- ★ Put away knives, guns, matches, bug spray, medicine, detergents, disinfectants and other items that can hurt your baby. Put them in a place your exploring baby can't reach or open.

Home hazards

Your baby is moving around a lot more. At this age, babies are naturally curious and get into everything. But they don't know what can hurt them. It's up to parents to keep babies safe. Check your house for safety hazards often:

- ★ Vacuum or sweep the floors. Pick up any small items such as buttons, coins and paper clips.
- ★ Latch window guards or open windows from the top.
- ★ Latch safety gates across stairs.
- ★ Lock the doors to balconies and decks.
- ★ Move electric fans out of baby's reach.

- ★ Place a protective screen around a space heater. Keep the heater away from curtains, paper and other materials that can catch fire.
- ★ If you have a gun, store it under lock and key. Make sure it is not loaded.
- ★ Check toys. If you find any loose or broken parts, repair the toy or remove it right away.

While your baby is awake and moving, stay close. Look for possible dangers. A pencil may seem harmless, but in a baby's hand it could poke an eye. Your careful watching will prevent accidents.

Water safety

Water is great for cleaning and drinking. But it can be a hazard for babies. They can drown in only a few inches of water. Here are some water safety tips:

- ★ Empty your mop bucket right after using it.
- ★ In the house and outside, store buckets, wash tubs and other large containers upside down.
- ★ Always keep one hand on your baby while he's in the bath.
- ★ Use a rubber mat, rubber decals or a bath chair to keep your baby from slipping in the bathtub.
- ★ Keep toilet lids closed. Use safety latches, if possible.
- ★ Save swimming until your baby is out of diapers. Play with a trickling hose or sprinkler instead. Babies are not toilet trained, so they can leave germs in swimming pools. Chlorine kills most swimming pool germs but not all of them. And it takes only a tiny number of germs to cause infections.
- ★ If you live near a swimming pool, make sure it is fenced and has a locked gate. Keep your baby away from any pools, ponds and creeks.

Other Possible Hazards Need Special Attention

Electrical cords: Cords invite pulling and tripping. Secure the cords along the base of the wall with clips or tape.

Electrical outlets: Cover outlets with plastic plug inserts available at the grocery or hardware store.

Blind cords: Mini blinds and drapes often have long cords. Tie these up, out of your baby's reach.

Lead paint: Wooden trim in older buildings is sometimes covered with paint that contains lead. This long-acting poison can hurt your child.

Lightweight furniture: Before long, your baby will be pulling himself up to stand. Almost all children use furniture to hold on to as they stand. Top-heavy furniture, like a TV stand, could topple over onto your baby. Rearrange furniture now, and you won't have to worry later.

When your baby does begin to reach for something he shouldn't, telling him "no" in a warm but firm voice will help him learn what's not okay to touch. It will take many "nos" before your baby will avoid reaching for something he shouldn't. You must say "no" and continue to watch your baby carefully. Babies this age are too young to trust to do the safe thing. Anger isn't helpful and may only scare him.

Games for Learning

Children learn through play, and your nine-month-old is ready to learn. Try some of these activities to help him learn about his world while you both have fun.

Read pictures. Share pictures, magazines and the newspaper with your baby. Point to and name things, actions, colors and people. You might, for example, look at a colorful ad. Point to the girl, boy, stove, radio, lawn mower, blue shirt and gardener.

Feel textures. Cut squares of fabric and glue them to a piece of cardboard. Try to have a variety of textures like corduroy, satin, burlap, vinyl and fake fur. Let your baby sit with you and help him feel each of the different textures with his hands. Describe the textures with words like rough, smooth, soft, bumpy and prickly.

Fill and dump. Gather five or six small, empty food containers like gelatin boxes, an oatmeal box and small cereal boxes. Tape or glue the containers closed. Give your baby a small paper bag. Show him how to fill the bag with groceries and dump them out again.

Love the baby. Give your baby a large baby doll or stuffed animal. Show him how to rock and cuddle with the doll. Point to and say "eyes," "nose," "mouth," "ears," "tummy" and "legs," for example. Show your baby where these features are on his body. Say "Here are the baby's ears. Where are your ears?"

Your Baby's Nine-Month Checkup

Babies need to go to the doctor often, even when they are well. They get shots to keep them from catching diseases. They get a physical exam to see how they are growing. If a problem is found, your doctor will suggest what to do. Taking care of small problems now will often keep them from becoming big problems later.

Doctor visits are also a good time to learn more. Ask the doctor or nurse about such things as:

- ★ taking the baby's temperature,
- ★ giving medicine or home remedies,
- ★ feeding milk and solid foods,
- ★ giving vitamins or other supplements,
- ★ putting the baby to sleep, and
- ★ following advice on baby care that others give you.

Guiding Your Baby

Your baby depends on you to teach him about his world. He needs to learn about things that hurt him and about those that hurt other people. He learns by exploring his world—with all his senses. He touches, tastes, smells, hears and sees. This exploring sometimes leads to trouble.

For example, Jarvis wants to touch and taste the coat button he sees under the chair. He crawls over, picks it up and starts to put it into his mouth. Jarvis' mother catches him as he puts the button on his tongue. She startles him when she says in a loud, angry voice, "No, no, no. Don't put that in your mouth." Next time, rather than using a loud, angry voice to stop Jarvis, his mother can calmly but firmly tell Jarvis to drop the button. She can gently tell him why he should not put the button into his mouth and then give him a safe toy to play with instead.

Parents can teach more and scold less by planning ahead. You have already made your home safe with childproofing, but now you have a crawling, curious nine-month-old. It's time to childproof again—with your baby's skills and interests in mind. You can start by getting down on the floor. Pretend you are your crawling baby. You'll see more things down on that level than you do standing up.

Early Intervention and Your Baby's Developing Skills

Children learn skills as they grow. These skills happen by certain ages. A child learns skills at his own pace. You can see how your baby is doing. Watch when he starts to crawl, walk, talk and feed himself.

If you are concerned that your baby is learning skills too slowly, talk to your doctor. You can also call 1-800-695-0285 to get information. The call is free. When you call, you will be told how to contact the early intervention program in your state. Staff of your state's early intervention program can assist you in finding help in your state.

What is an early intervention program?

An early intervention program helps children from birth to age three. Early intervention staff can help your baby learn to roll over, sit up, crawl and grasp toys.

They also help children who are having problems with seeing, hearing and talking.

How does an early intervention program help?

It can help your child with needed services and also help you join a support group.

Your family and early intervention staff can work together to plan services. These services teach basic skills and can be done in your home or during child care.

Games for Skill Building

Physical skills: Your baby is probably crawling or scooting around the floor. Help him build strong muscles and improve his balance. Build a mountain for him to climb by piling pillows on the floor. Encourage him to crawl over the mountain. Sit on the floor with your baby so you can help steady him as he climbs.

Social skills: Sing songs with your baby. Borrow recordings of children's music from the public library. Dance with the music. Or do finger and arm motions that match the words of the song.

Emotional skills: Your baby can probably recognize himself now. Hang an unbreakable mirror on a wall low to the ground. Encourage your baby to look at himself in the mirror. Talk to him about the image. Say things like "Look at Juan in the mirror. He's smiling now. Juan has curly hair."

Language skills: Your nine-month-old is a babbler. He probably copies sounds and soon will be saying words. Talk to him often. Play a game in which you say sounds—"ma-ma-ma-ma," for example. Give him time to repeat the sound to you. When he makes a sound, say it back to him.

Intellectual skills: Your baby is learning that things exist even if he can't see them. He can follow your voice from another room. He can crawl to get a ball that has rolled under a chair. Play "Hide and Find" with him. Get a small object like a block or a spoon. Cover it with a small towel or scarf. Ask "Where is the block?" Let your baby uncover the block by moving the scarf. He'll love to play this game over and over.

What's It Like To Be Nine Months Old?

- ★ I can move toys and other small things from one hand to the other.
- ★ I may begin to pull myself up to stand. But I need something sturdy to hold on to.
- ★ I can pick up toys, food and small things using my fingers and thumb.
- ★ I usually put a toy or food down by dropping or throwing it.
- ★ I have good balance and can sit by myself.
- ★ I crawl on my hands and knees. I may try to move up and down stairs.
- ★ I like to watch people, animals, things and activities around me.
- ★ I want to taste everything I touch.
- ★ I practice making noises with my mouth. I try to copy the sounds I hear.
- ★ I recognize my family and like being with them.
- ★ I am sometimes afraid of strangers. I don't like being away from my parents.
- ★ I like to play peek-a-boo and other games that help me find hidden things.
- ★ I like to show that I know how to use everyday items like a cup, a hairbrush and a ball.
- ★ I like songs and rhymes and can bounce-dance to music.
- ★ I know my name and smile when someone says it.

Bathing Your Baby

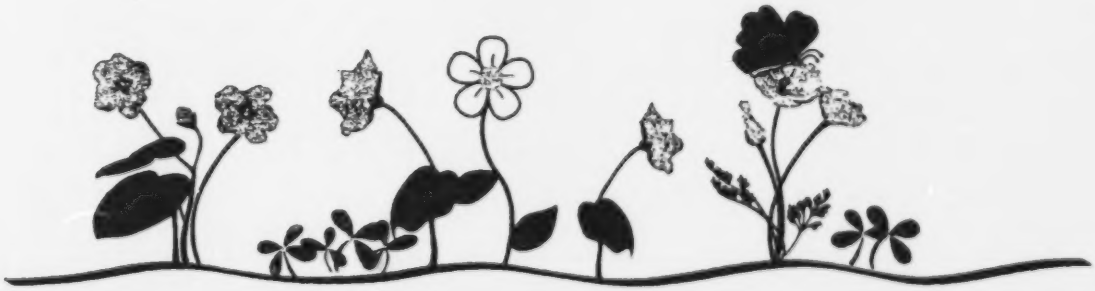
Your baby will probably enjoy his daily bath. You may struggle to get all of him clean while he splashes, slides and wiggles.

Your baby may have great balance and sit without support. But he still needs the safety of a plastic baby bathtub or bath chair. If you don't have a tub or chair, keep one arm around the baby all the time. Gather all the things you need before he goes into the water.

Encourage water play. It helps build coordination and control. Give your baby bath toys and let him splash, pour and catch water. Use bath time to teach. Talk to your baby about water and his play. Even though he won't be able to say the words yet, he'll begin to understand "empty," "full," "dry," "wet," "float" and "sink."

Keep your baby safe in the bath. Here are some ways:

- ★ Stay alert. Don't take your hand off the baby for even a second. If you must move away, take the baby with you.
- ★ Give your baby toys for the bath. Store the toys in a mesh bag that hangs from the showerhead. They will drain and be out of the way of other bathers.
- ★ Drain the tub right after the bath.
- ★ Don't let your baby go into the bathroom without you. Keep the bathroom door closed and the toilet lid down.



Bowel Habits

Because your baby is eating more solid foods, his bowel movements may change. Solid food moves more slowly through the intestines. And stools become heavier and less frequent.

Some babies have one or two bowel movements a day. Your baby may have one every other day. For some children that's normal. If the bowel movement is hard and painful, check with your doctor.

It is too early for your baby to start learning to use the toilet. This learning must wait until two things happen. Your child must be able to feel his body's "need to go." He must also be able to get to the toilet. Usually this doesn't happen until a child is two years old or older. Trying to start earlier will be frustrating for you and your baby.

You can start preparing for this learning now. Talk to your baby when you change his diaper. Say, for example, "Wow! Your diaper is so wet this morning. Let's change it and make you clean and dry again." This helps your baby learn the words wet and dry. This helps him connect being dry to being comfortable.

Sleeping Patterns

The ordinary, loving things you do every day with your baby are routines. Putting him to bed, changing diapers, bathing and feeding are the most common ones. Routines help your baby feel loved and safe. Routines can also be times for learning.

At this age, most babies sleep about 13 hours a day. They may have a long night sleep of about 10 hours, a short morning nap and a longer afternoon nap. A nine-month-old may stay awake past regular sleep times. This happens when your baby is excited, involved in activities or just doesn't want to be away from you.

Avoid sleep problems by building routines that help your baby move from active play to restful sleep. You can turn down the lights and background noise like the TV or music. Your baby will be more likely to go to bed if he doesn't think he'll miss something exciting.

Create a routine. This could include a soothing bath, a bedtime story and good-night kisses to family members. Give him a stuffed animal, a special blanket or other "snuggly." Put it and your baby into bed. If you use a crib, keep the sides up and securely fastened.

Don't be surprised if he doesn't go to sleep right away. He may babble to himself and later fall asleep on top of the covers. Let him form his own comfort habits—rocking or sucking a thumb, for example. These habits help him put himself to sleep.

Be consistent with your bedtime routine. Reassure your baby if he cries. But make sure he knows that you mean business—it's time for bed.

Help Your Baby Feed Himself

By nine months of age, your baby can grasp food and get it to his mouth. He will be more successful feeding himself if you serve the right foods in the right sizes.

Serve finger foods as part of the main meal. For example, you may need to spoon feed cereal and peaches, but your baby can manage to feed himself small pieces of cracker.

Let your baby discover the tastes and textures of finger foods. Watch your baby carefully as you give him very small pieces of the following finger foods:

- ★ Toasted bread crusts
- ★ Crackers
- ★ Zwieback toast
- ★ Cheese cubes
- ★ Cooked pasta
- ★ Slices of ripe peach or pear
- ★ Rice

Cooked vegetables also make great finger foods. Offer small amounts of cooked squash, sweet potato, white potato, beans and carrots. Avoid raw vegetables now. Your baby doesn't have enough teeth to chew hard food.

Equipment for happy meals

- ★ Highchair. If you have one, make sure it's sturdy. It should have a big tray as well as a harness or safety belt. Spread newspaper or towels underneath at mealtime to make cleaning up easier.
- ★ Bibs. Look for rigid plastic bibs with a pocket designed to catch spills.
- ★ Dishes. Use a heavy plastic bowl that won't slide around on the high chair tray table. You can serve most foods at room temperature or a little warmer.
- ★ Cups. Serve liquids in a baby cup with two handles and a lid with a spout. This kind of cup makes learning to drink easier.

Solid Foods

Learning to eat solid foods is a big task for an infant. Your baby has learned hunger can be satisfied with breast milk or infant formula. Now he has to learn that hunger can also be satisfied with solid foods. By nine months, your baby will probably enjoy three main meals a day with morning and afternoon snacks. His nutrition now comes more from solid food and less from breast milk or formula.

Continue to offer new foods. But include a variety of foods at every meal. Most of the foods you prepare for your family are fine for your nine-month-old. Chop food into small pieces. If your baby develops a rash, diarrhea or signs of upset stomach after eating a new food, stop serving it. Avoid cow's milk, honey, salt, hot spices and added sugar.

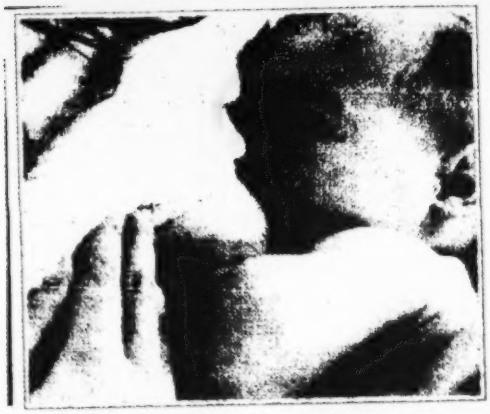
Don't worry about your baby not getting enough to eat. You don't need to coax and urge, "One more bite for daddy." If you offer a variety of healthful foods, your baby will eat what he needs. Just don't fill him up with cookies, sweet drinks or juices.

If your baby is hungry for a snack, try these foods:

- ★ Pieces of banana
- ★ Thin slices of whole wheat bread and butter
- ★ Plain yogurt mixed with mashed fruit
- ★ Small, dry cereal pieces
- ★ Cubes of soft cheese

Satisfy thirst with water. Save juice for treats.

Breastfeeding Tips



Your baby may be eating many kinds of solid foods. But breast milk is still his main source of nutrition. You need to eat healthy foods to maintain your energy and milk supply. Your body may be making less milk now because your baby is nursing less. But if your baby wants to nurse more, your body will make more milk.

Help your baby learn about drinking from a cup. Many parents like using a cup with a lid and spout. This helps babies move from sucking to sipping. You might want to put breast milk in the cup. Offer it at meals. As your baby learns to drink, put more breast milk in the cup. Or put water in the cup.

Your baby is learning to feed himself. That means mealtimes may be messy and stressful. Avoid quarrels. Give your baby finger foods. Talk with him so he will learn that mealtime is a social time. Finish with a relaxed breast-feeding.

Sometimes your baby may want to play instead of nurse. When that happens, let him sit on your lap. Read a story or sing a song instead. He may not be hungry. Or he may be bored with the feeding. Remember, nursing satisfies both physical and emotional needs. Let your baby nurse whenever he needs a snack. Let him nurse when he needs to feel your loving arms.

To learn more about breastfeeding, you may want to contact your local health department, WIC clinic, hospital, La Leche League or doctor. You can call La Leche League at 1-800-LALECHE or visit their Web site at www.lalecheleague.org/.

Protect Your Baby's Teeth

Your baby probably has several teeth by now. Baby teeth are important. They can affect how the permanent teeth will grow.

Your baby learns by watching you. Set a good example. Brush your teeth after every meal. Avoid eating sugary foods. Go to the dentist for regular checkups.

If you notice any white spots on your baby's teeth, take him to a dentist. White spots may be a sign of decay. Regular dental care starts at age one. Emergency dental care can begin sooner.

Here are some ways to protect your baby's teeth:

★ If your baby needs a bottle to fall asleep, give him only water in a bottle or a cup. Liquids other than water contain sugar. Feeding at bedtime may leave sugar on teeth all night. Then sugar has more time to turn into decay

★ If you feed your baby formula, always hold him while feeding. Never prop the bottle.

★ If you use a pacifier, keep it clean. Don't coat it with anything.

★ Wipe your baby's teeth and gums every night. Use a wet, clean, soft washcloth.

Choking Hazards for Young Eaters

Stay close to your baby while he eats. Choking is an emergency that can be prevented. Just make sure all food is carefully prepared. Stay nearby and watch that your baby doesn't put too much food into his mouth.

Some foods are more likely than others to cause choking. Your baby is too young for foods that are hard, chunky or need to be chewed. Save these foods until your baby is three or four years old. Then there will be less danger of choking.

Look for classes on infant cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and basic first aid in your community. Or borrow a free video on first aid from your video store or public library. If your baby does start to choke, call 911 right away. This is an emergency. Do what the operator says. Stay on the line until you are sure your baby is all right.

Never feed your baby the following:

- ★ Hot dogs
- ★ Hard candy
- ★ Peanuts or any nuts
- ★ Grapes
- ★ Cookies
- ★ Meat chunks
- ★ Raw carrot slices
- ★ Peanut butter
- ★ Apple chunks
- ★ Popcorn

Take Time for Yourself

Taking care of a baby often creates stress. You may feel stressed without knowing it. Here are a few common symptoms:

★ Anxiety. You may worry about the baby, your marriage, money, work or school. You may feel guilty for not doing better.

★ Confusion. You may forget things, like where you put your keys. You may run late. You may feel that you just can't handle anything.

★ Anger. You may lose your temper easily. You may snap at people.

★ Sleeplessness. You may not be able to sleep well at night. Or you may have nightmares.

★ Fatigue. You may feel tired a lot. Or you may not feel like doing things you normally enjoy. You may cry easily.

★ Physical problems. You may have neck or back pain, headaches or stomach aches.

If any of this is happening to you, check with your doctor. Make sure there is no other reason for you to feel as you do.

Find ways to cope with stress. Here are some ideas:

- ★ Talk to friends and other parents. Sharing your feelings may help reduce stress.
- ★ Write down all the things that worry you. Making a list may help you think more clearly. Work on one thing at a time.
- ★ Ask for help. Ask your partner to shop for groceries. Ask a nurse about relaxation exercises. Talk to a school counselor or religious advisor.
- ★ Exercise. Take a walk. Push the baby in a stroller. Dance to music on the radio.
- ★ Nap when your baby does. Darken the room. Turn off the telephone. Play soft music.
- ★ Take a break. Ask someone you trust to keep your baby for an hour or two. Go window-shopping at the mall. Find a book at the public library. Visit a friend

Quick stress busters

- ★ Breathe deeply. Close your eyes.
- ★ Tighten your muscles. Then relax them.
- ★ Stand up and stretch.

When Someone Else Cares for Your Baby

All parents are a little nervous when someone else cares for their baby. You may have asked an aunt to baby-sit for a few hours. Or you may have your baby in a state-licensed program. Anytime someone else cares for your baby, help make it safe. Here are some ways.

Give the caregiver a phone number where you can be reached. Give the name of your baby's doctor. Write permission to get medical help in an emergency.

Tell the caregiver about your baby's likes and dislikes. For example, he doesn't like carrots. And he likes his "blankey" at naptime.

Share your baby's routine. For example, he usually wakes up at 5:30 a.m. That means he takes a nap about 9 a.m. He's slow to wake up and needs a few quiet minutes before wanting to be with people.

Maintain a business approach. If you pay for care—even if it's your sister—be clear about what you expect. For example, you expect the caregiver to change wet diapers right away and then wash her hands. Don't take advantage of the arrangement. The caregiver expects you to pick up your baby at the time you have agreed upon.

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How Children Grow

When parents are asked what they want for their children, they usually say they want children who

- ★ feel good about themselves;
- ★ get along with others;
- ★ have healthy, strong bodies;
- ★ are smart and successful; and
- ★ can talk about what they need and want.

These answers match the ways children grow and develop. All children can develop emotional, social, physical, intellectual and communication skills. These skills help babies grow into well-balanced, successful adults.

All children grow and develop. But no two babies do it in the same way at the same time. Each baby is unique. Each has strengths in some areas. Each also has needs. If you have concerns about your baby's development, talk to his doctor.

Information Resources for Families

Families who are enrolled in the WIC program (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children) can get information on breastfeeding, formula feeding and nutrition at their local WIC office. Families eligible for WIC receive nutrition counseling and supplemental foods such as baby formula, milk and cereal. To find the WIC office nearest you, call your state health department or visit the WIC Web site at www.fns.usda.gov/wic/.

For information about early childhood education initiatives, you may contact the U.S. Department of Education at 1-800-USA-LEARN or visit their Web site at www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/teachingouryoungest/.

To learn about child care options, you may contact the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Child Care Aware by phone at 1-800-424-2246 or visit their Web site at www.childcareaware.org/.

For more information and resources on postpartum depression, breastfeeding, and many other women's health issues call The National Women's Health Information Center (NWHIC) at 1-800-994-9662 (1-800-994-WOMAN). You can visit their Web site at www.4woman.gov/.

To learn more about breastfeeding, you may call La Leche League at 1-800-LALECHE or visit their Web site at www.lalecheleague.org/.

To learn more about free or low-cost health insurance for children, you can call the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Insure Kids Now 1-877-KIDSNOW. You can also visit their Web site at www.insurekidsnow.gov/.

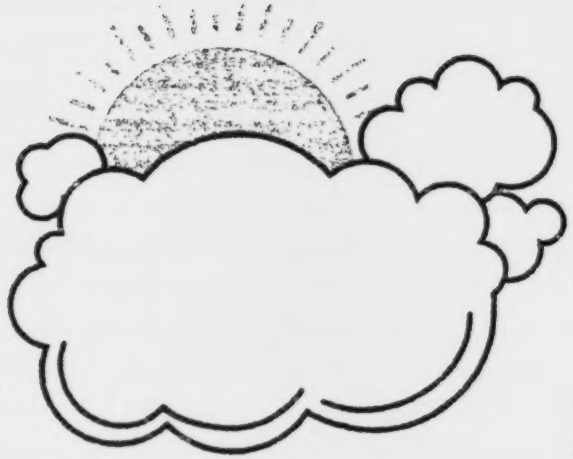
The American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC) poison control hotline, 1-800-222-1222, should be on your list of emergency numbers. To learn more, you can visit the AAPCC Web site at www.aapcc.org/.

Families who cannot afford a car safety seat can contact the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. They can provide information on resources that help low-income families purchase or borrow child car seats. You may call them at 1-800-424-9393 or visit their Web site at www.nhtsa.dot.gov/.

To learn more about safety, you can call the Consumer Product Safety Commission at 1-800-638-2772 or you can visit their Web site at www.cpsc.gov/.

For information on disabilities and disability-related issues for families, you can call the National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY) at 1-800-695-0285 or visit their Web site at www.nichcy.org/.

For information about programs that teach adults how to read, you can call America's Literacy Directory at 1-800-228-8813 or visit their Web site at: www.literacydirectory.org/.



Coming Next Month

Guards Against Poisons

Growing Up with Plants

Fears and Tears

Guidance and Discipline

. . . and much more!

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